

## Sharon Energy Committee Meeting

Monday, November 27<sup>h</sup>, 2017

Sharon Town Office (mostly) / 69 Route 132 / Sharon, VT

### **Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**

Members Present: Dee Gish, Ryan Haac

Others Present: Chris Damiani (TRORC), Suzanne Jones

After a brief visit to the library and Seven Stars in search of accessible meeting space, Ryan Haac called the meeting to order at the Town Offices at 17:50 (5:50pm).

#### **1) Public Comments.**

None

**Items 2-6** on the agenda were disregarded/postponed due to the late start of the meeting. Item 7 was displaced to the end of the meeting.

Note: To maximize time at future meetings, housekeeping items and any brief ongoing Energy Committee meeting business will be addressed at the outset of recurring meetings (fourth Monday of each month) and followed immediately by Enhanced Energy Planning discussion. Thus, future meetings start at 17:15 (5:15pm) with the intention of diving into Enhanced Energy Planning discussion soon thereafter. Topics requiring additional consideration or deliberation will require additional Energy Committee meetings to be scheduled as needed.

#### **8) Kick-off Enhanced Energy Planning**

Ryan Haac developed a consensus for the task at hand as a process in which we construct a blueprint for Sharon's sustainability that quantifies our:

- Current renewable energy generation portfolio;
- Current demand for electricity, heating fuel, and transportation;
- Future overall energy consumption types and targets; and
- Future renewable energy generation potential; and
- Ability to meet State goals for energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable production.

Then, Ryan introduced Chris Damiani of TRORC, who will be assisting our Town with the collection of existing energy generation/consumption data, the mapping of town resources and constraints, and general guidance for Enhanced Energy Plan (EEP) compliance. Chris will attend monthly recurring meetings through July 2018 to offer assistance to the Town in enhancing the energy element of the Town Plan. Chris explained that to meet the renewable energy component of the plan for Act 174 compliance, the town cannot inhibit development of renewable resources such that future generation targets become unattainable (based on current technology). In addition, we must also continue to increase the efficiencies in how we consume energy, through weatherization, appliance upgrades, and fuel switching, to name a few.

## **Summaries of discussion points are as follows:**

- The [VT Energy Atlas](#) was mentioned as a very convenient and relatively complete mapping resource for public and planning use.
- One goal of the process is to identify sites within the Town of Sharon that are “preferred” sites for renewable energy generation. A site identified as preferred by the Town (or by current [Net Metering Rule 5.100](#)) is currently incentivized by valuing the energy generated at the site at higher than standard rates, thus increasing the overall value of the electricity generated. So if one is considering a renewable generation facility on their property, the preferred designation can prove to be a valuable proposition. Dee pointed out that there is a workaround for developers to achieving preferred site status if their intended site is not identified as preferred in the EEP: they request and are granted such status on the parcel by the Selectboard. Roof-mounted renewable generation is classified as a preferred site, by default.
- One goal in Chapter 10 of the Town Plan is to develop scenic resource maps. Although outside the immediate scope of Enhanced Energy Planning, identifying the specific areas in the Town that are designated as scenic (and historic) resources could help inform preferred sites that can be designated in the plan we are developing. No one present was able to offer any leadership for pursuing this effort at this time; we collectively
- The Town itself (Town buildings, the Road Crew, the School) should set the example for energy efficiency and renewable energy generation. Current examples of this concept in action are the recent weatherization and heating system upgrades at the Town Office and the PV system on Sharon Elementary’s roof. Some ideas for further leadership by the Town are investing in electric vehicle charging stations in Town and bio-diesel fuel for the fleet at the Town Garage.
- Barriers to renewable energy development that should be addressed in the plan were also identified. Suzanne and Dee detailed some of the complications with current use designations and energy development in that property taxes on a developed parcel may increase: this cost needs to be factored into the cost of developing the parcel.
- We discussed the fact that the Town Plan currently discourages development on ridgelines. Chris mentioned that the Northwest Regional Planning Commission developed a policy that prohibit commercial development above specific elevations, which could aid in providing the reasonable constraints that protect ridgelines and headwaters in Sharon from high impact development.

## **+7) Anything Else?**

Suzanne brought up the notion of a Town Woodlot. She noted that Nowich owned and operated a Town Woodlot on Beaver Meadow Road and that workdays appeared to prove quite fruitful. Suzanne brought this up in the context that we experienced a great deal of blow-downs during the recent windy storm and it would be great to get firewood to those in need. We all agreed that the idea is a great proposition but requires a dedicated location and leader.

## **9) Schedule next meeting**

We set the next meeting for December 18<sup>th</sup> at 17:15 (5:15pm). At this meeting, we will be discussing the current data and targets for energy consumption, production, and conservation.

Ryan adjourned the meeting at 19:10 (7:10pm).